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8



루이온 E&M



Return of Godly Control - Chapter 00-01

Table of Contents

1. [Prologue](#)
2. [Chapter 0:Five Years Ago](#)
3. [Chapter 1: Night Visitor](#)

Prologue

5 years ago, things were moderately well.

No, it went very well. Everyone told me I was the best and I thought so myself.

I was prideful. Everyone recognized me and I thought like that as well.

The virtual reality game ‘Fantasia,’ I was called the King of the Arena. King Laden. It was an embarrassing nickname now that I thought about it but I had great pride in it 5 years ago.

Yes.

5 years ago.

It wasn’t a short amount of time. Even a winged bird would have to come down to earth to rest their wings for a short period of time.

In my case, my wings weren’t tired but broken. No, I was shot.

My character deleted.

I fell down and was trampled on. The people’s attention turned away from me and I was quickly forgotten.

Since then, I didn’t play any games.

Until yesterday.

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Chapter 0:Five Years Ago

0. Five Years Ago.

“Year 2037, October 11th. Millions around the world, no tens of millions! The time that many people have been waiting for has finally arrived.”

Park Young-jun, a famous commentator in V-sports (virtual sports) cried out in a passionate voice. The guild leader of the Saulabi Guild, Lee Gun-seong nodded at the commentator’s words.

It wasn’t only Lee Gun-seong. There were a total of four people next to the commentator. They were all guild masters responsible for sizeable guilds inside the virtual reality game Fantasia. Park Young-jun eyed the girl sitting next to him.

Jung Ha-ran. She was the guild master of the Comet Guild, one of the top 5 guilds in Korea. She only just turned 18 and her pretty face and skills meant she had many followers in Fantasia. She might be similar to a celebrity but Park Young-jun had no intention of having mercy towards a little girl.

‘I need contents for my commentary.’

Park Young-jun was a firm man with a strong philosophy.

“Alkena ssi?”

“...Yes...yes?”

Alkena. The name Jung Ha-ran used in Fantasia. Jung Ha-ran, no Alkena looked at Park Young-jun with a surprised expression.

This tension. Park Young-jun thought coldly. She might know the game inside out but Alkena had almost no activities outside the game. Broadcasters sent her interview requests several times but she didn’t reply.

It was surprising that Alkena joined Park Young-jun today so it was a sign that she cared about today’s clash.

“Alkena ssi clearly...you on the side that Laden will win?”

King Laden. He was an unusual player in several ways. There were no distinct forces. He didn’t even have a guild. He didn’t participate in monster raids in

Fantasia or wars for the country.

But that didn't mean Laden wasn't playing the game. He enjoyed the game in a different manner from others. He soloed monsters meant for a party and used guerrilla warfare in the mountains.

In particular, Laden was known as the best PVP player.

"Ah....yes. Yes, that's right."

Alkena nodded stiffly as she replied. The reaction was a little slow but Park Young-jun still thought it was good. A pretty 18 year old school girl was showing a red, shy face on broadcast. There was no doubt that it would work.

"If you don't mind, can you tell me why you think so?"

"Ah...that...I mean..."

Alkena was disconcerted but Park Young-jun couldn't be blamed because the questions had been prepared in advance. Alkena flipped through some documents on the table and coughed.

"....First off, the viewers watching this should know it very well. Laden...King Laden, he has an unprecedeted winning record in the arena of Fantasia. 980 wins, 3 draws and 12 losses. Millions of people enjoy playing Fantasia but no one has achieved such an overwhelming record."

Virtual reality game, there existed a place in Fantasia called 'arena.' Once someone registered and applied, they would be randomly matched in a 1 VS 1 player at a similar level.

980 wins, 3 draws and 12 losses.

When considered that an average player didn't normally have more than 300 victories, defeats or ties, Laden's established record made no sense.

"Alkena is correct."

Beside Alkena was Lee Gun-seong, leader of the Saulabi Guild. No, Rubeck nodded his head. Like Alkena, he was also a commentator that expected Laden to win.

"The nickname King Laden, King of the Arena. Laden earned that nickname by

proving his PVP skills. Laden only suffered 12 losses and 3 draws. When looking at his spec sheets, Laden suffered those defeats in the early days of the arena. After the 50th match, Laden wasn't defeated even once. In other words, Laden wasn't defeated in 930 PVP matches."

That was how he gained the title of 'King.' King of the Arena. He didn't pick a guild or played in a party. A hard-core solo oriented player who spent most of his time in the arena.

It was natural that Laden would have followers. Many users started Fantasia because they wanted to be like Laden and started imitating Laden by immersing themselves in arena or solo gameplay.

Of course, none of the players could match up to Laden.

"...Yes. Just like Rubeck said, Laden's arena record is phenomenal. If I dare say it, Laden is the god of PVP. I think that not one player in Fantasia can catch Laden in a one on one fight. Only a group of 10 people would be able to fight him."

"Is that enough?"

Park Young-jun said sneakily. It was Park Young-jun's role as a commentator to know Laden's basic information. His roles was to provide a springboard for the other commentators' reactions.

"The end system consists of farming, levelling and raids. You will eventually become familiar with your own skills and the contents of the raid. Farming can also be finished at any time. Then there is the arena. At this time, most people would be thinking 'Oh, I am good enough' and would head towards the arena."

Rubeck snorted while laughing. It was obviously full of derision.

"No. It is a funny idea. Of course, I can understand such thoughts. The farming system and raids are going well. It is a situation where they feel in control of themselves. But...PVE and PVP is completely different. Less than 4~5 people. There are only a few people. Catching a monster in a raid with a group is completely different from fighting alone in PVP. And Laden is Fantasia's top PVP player."

"That's right. Well, there is an interesting fact here."

Park Young-jun slowly looked down at his wrist watch. There was still some time until the match starts. The anchor-man and commentators needed to maintain the viewer's interest before the fight started. Park Young-jun's mouth moved quickly.

"Doom Knight Casabulo. A monster that the commentators here have faced. And the viewers watching the broadcast should be familiar with it. A boss of 'La Baroque Castle' that occurred when the expansion pack was released 1 year ago."

"Ahh. I know what you are trying to say."

Compared to the less experienced Alkena, Rubeck was much more relaxed. He had appeared several times as a commentator on V-sports and considered himself a virtual reality game BJ.

"Casabulo is now present on the Fantasia continent and is considered one of the most difficult bosses. In fact, many guilds paid more attention to the main boss La Baroque than to Casabulo when it was first released to the public. It was inevitable...Casabulo is too small. A hulking humanoid that is similar to a player's avatar...he also used a sword as a weapon. I can see why people thought it was ridiculous."

"But it wasn't."

Alkena knew the answer. She shook her head slowly and said.

"Casabulo is much more difficult than La Baroque. His body is so small that the attacks from players didn't hit well. And the sword unleashed wide area attacks. He had all types of magic buffs and debuffs...recovery magic...and he also had awfully high stamina."

"Do you believe that La Baroque Castle should be called Casabulo Castle instead? Well, Casabulo was also defeated. It took 40 people in the raiding party. Since then, there were several hundred attempts to break the record until a group of 15 people eventually succeeded in killing Casabulo. Until recently, those 15 people had the best record."

"But Laden changed it!"

Park Young-jun exclaimed in a cheerful voice.

“Wah, an expansion that the top guild masters had been waiting for. Then King Laden went out to face the monster alone?”

“Why do you think there was an uproar? Laden’s video of 1 person against Casabulo was posted on a free internet site. The players around the world wrote underneath it...in the end, Fantasia officially declared that no illegal programs were used.”

“That fact...I still can’t believe it. No matter what a player’s specs are, they can’t compare to that of a monster. Unless there happened to be a significant level difference. Right now 100 is the limit in Fantasia and a level 100 player could attack a level 100 boss monster. The specifications can’t even be compared There is no reason for a raid if the specs are similar.”

“If any members of the audience hasn’t seen the video yet then they should watch it now. Laden is crazy. If you look at the video then you can only call him crazy. He avoided Casabulo’s attacks and counterattacked. He was able to prevent anything from leaking against his will. Laden’s class is a ‘Martial Artist.’ In Fantasia, a martial artist has low stamina and defense but makes up for it in their attack power and speed. In other words, it is a profession that needs to hit. In that one video against Casabulo, Laden showed the extreme limits of a martial artist.”

“Yes, he did it very well.”

It stopped here. Park Young-jun checked the clock again. The timing was perfect. Now it was time to listen to the other side.

“The monster that Laden is fighting against, Emperor Rake!”

Emperor Rake. He was the first person to become an emperor in Fantasia. In many ways, he was a player that was the exact opposite of Laden. He was the Emperor of Noah in the central region of Fantasia and was the guild leader of one of the largest guilds, Paragon.

Laden enjoyed playing solo while Rake was a thoroughly party oriented person. While Laden was PVPing in the arena, Rake was capturing top level dungeons and boss monsters. Most bosses that were newly released in Fantasia were first suppressed by Rake.

“Rake will win.”

A man silently sitting on the right side opened his mouth. It was Garam who was the guild master of ‘Weiss.’

“Oh, is that so? Why do you think that?”

Park Young-jun asked Garam without any hesitation. Garam spoke slowly as Park Young-jun’s gaze remained on him.

“Due to the different specifications.”

“...S...pecs? If it is specs....”

“Weapons, armour and accessories. When added to the basic stats of the avatar, Rake is overwhelmingly superior. Don’t you think a person who spends money would enjoy Fantasia the most? What about the person wearing the best items? He is Rake.”

It was unknown what country Laden was from or what job he had. Everything was unknown. But Rake was different. He was the heir to one of the largest family run conglomerates in the United States.

“The Black Light Sword Ragnar. Currently it is one of the most outstanding weapons released in Fantasia. And the Harmless Armour. This is also one of the most advanced armours. The shoes belonging to the god Hermes also contains magic that will deflect certain attacks. In addition, all of Rake’s equipment are one of a kind on Fantasia. If any of them are released on the market then Fantasia’s economy would be reversed.”

Luanos, the guild leader of the Black Butterfly Guild remarked after Garam.

“And Rake’s profession is Crusader. It is the worst profession to face. Rake’s position as a crusader is a tanker. Laden might be the best PVP player in Fantasia but Rake is the tanker with the strongest defense. Putting aside the items, Rake’s tanker skills are at the peak. He is too good. From profession to specifications.”

“It is like Luanos-nim said. Rake’s profession is a tanker. He is the tanker with his skills at the peak in Fantasia. Rake lacks damage as a tanker. His items can help with the lack of attack power. Rake has the Black Light Sword Ragnar. In Fantasia, there are only 14 types of items with one copy on the continent.

Among those 14 types in Fantasia, how many of them are weapons?"

"He is called King Laden but in this case, there is no way he can beat Rake. What about Alkena-nim's comparison of Laden to a boss?"

Luanos' eyes headed towards Alkena. She laughed with eyes darkened by eyeliner.

"No matter how excellent the AI of the boss monster, it is still a monster that moves in a fixed pattern. The degree of difficulty for Casabulo might be high but...once you are familiar with the pattern, it isn't impossible to catch it. But Rake? Rake is a human. The pattern is not fixed. In addition, his specifications might make him superior to a boss monster."

There were a series of negative remarks. Once the psychological warfare between the commentators ended, Park Young-jun checked the time again.

'A little more.'

"Now the match will start soon."

The atmosphere naturally changed. Despite the fact that they were on different sides about who would win, the commentators were still players of Fantasia. They were players recognized in different fields, including PVP. Their hearts purely wanted to watch.

"Which reminds me, isn't this fight due to a quarrel between Laden and the Paragon Guild?"

"Ah, yes. The public doesn't know this yet but Laden and Paragon clashed in the Ellehab Jungle. In that place, Laden PKed 10 members of the Paragon Guild."

"Then Rake made a direct offer. A PVP match in the arena. If Laden wins then Paragon will leave him alone and if Rake wins...Laden will come to the Paragon Guild."

"But Laden refused."

Alkena sighed.

"He vowed that he would rather delete his character than join the Paragon Guild."

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Chapter 1: Night Visitor

1. Night Visitor.

There was no eternal peak.

10 years ago, the throne was guarded by the virtual reality game ‘Fantasia.’ Then a new virtual reality game was released 1 year ago. ‘Valhalla’ was a perfect fantasy that topped Fantasia in every way.

The system, the degree of freedom, action, monsters, NPCs etc. There was a technology difference as Fantasia released bold, new expansions but it lost to Valhalla and Fantasia never managed to get the throne back.

Naturally Fantasia was pushed to the back. The instrument was crucial so many prominent players moved from Fantasia to Valhalla.

It was the same in South Korea. Rubeck who was leader of the Saulabi Guild and a virtual reality BJ, Garam of the ‘Weiss’ Guild and Luanos of the ‘Black Butterfly’ Guild all relocated from Fantasia to Valhalla.

Of course, the top ranked players and their guilds migrated to Valhalla. Valhalla opened its game service two months later. Valhalla succeeded in depriving Fantasia of the majority of its top ranked players.

Fantasia was below water. No matter how hard they played the game, players couldn’t reduce the gap between them and those who started Fantasia from the beginning of the service.

But Valhalla was different. The game had just opened. The advantages were enough. Even if the top ranked players had migrated, they were still starting under the same conditions. If they tried then they could become highly ranked.

The virtual reality game Fantasia had ruled the throne for 10 years so the top ranked players received a lot of admiration and jealousy. Wealth and fame could be enjoyed in the game and in reality. Millions of people around the world played the games so it was close to reality. The top ranked players were stars in reality and their gameplay videos would receive a tremendous amount of hits.

A glamorous life. Players dreaming of that life started Valhalla.

And almost a year after Valhalla was released, Hero Corporation that developed Valhalla successfully acquired Fantasia.

Fantasia naturally went downwards.

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“Hey, wake up.”

Kim Hyun-sung felt a tap and raised his bowed head. He was on a break at his part time job. He was roughly woken up from his dream of a meal so of course he felt bad. Kim Hyun-sung frowned at Park Ji-seok with sleepy eyes.

“What is it? Huh?”

“Emperor Rake’s video! This time it was a raid on the boss of Ajan Labyrinth. The video is free!”

His right pinkie finger twitched. Kim Hyun-sung pressed firmly against his sleepy eyes. The video quality posted on a free website was bad. He couldn’t seem to keep his eyes open and focused.

“Hey, you should pay money instead of looking at free videos.”

“I am familiar with it already. And why should I give money when I won’t get money in return?”

Park Ji-seok complained as he handed earphones to Kim Hyun-sung. Kim Hyun-sung looked at Park Ji-seok’s sparkling eyes and shook his head.

“I won’t watch.”

“Why not? Hey, you are really something. Don’t you want to look at virtual reality games?”

“I don’t want to look. How many minutes do I have left of my break?”

“10 minutes.”

“Wake me up in 10 minutes. I’ll sleep better.”

Kim Hyun-sung turned his head and laid it back down again. Park Ji-seok looked at Kim Hyun-sung and muttered.

“Bizarre. Who isn’t interested in virtual reality games in this era? Why don’t you buy it for fun?”

“My house doesn’t have a capsule. I have no money to buy a capsule or make an account.”

“Then go to a capsule room. It isn’t that much.”

“I am busy working. I never thought about it.”

Kim Hyun-sung didn’t speak any longer and plugged the earphones in his ear. Park Ji-seok didn’t ask Kim Hyun-sung any more questions. The image quality wasn’t great but the sound could be heard from the earphone. Park Ji-seok was watching the video as a hologram emerging from his cell phone.

There was no sound in Kim Hyun-sung’s earphones.

Kim Hyun-sung used the earphones to try and ignore Park Ji-seok. Emperor Rake. The top player in Fantasia, he was still at the pinnacle after relocating to Valhalla. Money and power in reality. The skills of a gamer. In addition, his network.

Most players dreamed of being top ranked in Valhalla. Valhalla’s service had now been open for a year. It was a distance that a newcomer could still reverse. If they played the game efficiently.

‘No.’

But Kim Hyun-sung knew very well. No matter how hard a newcomer worked, they couldn’t reach the players at the peak. Especially if the top player was Emperor Rake.

Kim Hyun-sung was more aware of this fact than anyone else. The feeling was deeply rooted in his bones and heart.

He was Laden.

*

King of the Arena. King. Kim Hyun-sung had only been 15 years old when he was given that nickname.

It was just coincidentally started in the game. It was funny and it seemed to

catch on.

He didn't do any raids. The basic cycle of overnight raids meant he couldn't attend because of school. In addition, there were financial problems. Finally, Kim Hyun-sung turned his gaze towards the arena.

The main content in Fantasia were raids, war and the arena. There were three. But initially, the arena in Fantasia wasn't that popular. The continent of Fantasia was too wide and there were countless raids and monsters to catch. Wars also broke out between state and country or estate vs estate. There was a wide variety of content to enjoy besides the arena PVP.

At that time, the arena was the only content Kim Hyun-sung enjoyed in Fantasia. He had no capsule at home so he would go to the capsule room in the neighbourhood and enter the arena. A capsule room cost 10,000 won per hour. It was arduous on the wallet of 15 year old but he could enjoy it to some extent.

Fight, fight and fight again. Every time he connected to Fantasia in the capsule room, Kim Hyun-sung would immediately turn to the arena. He was defeated a few times in the beginning but then his power became overwhelming.

Soon Kim Hyun-sung's character 'Laden' was given the nickname of King.

'I was crazy.'

It still upset his stomach when he thought about it. Kim Hyun-sung didn't realize it then but there were countless ways Laden could've made money from the game. Editing of high quality footage could raise money if he posted it to the internet.

Laden didn't do anything like that.

'The young really is crazy.'

Kim Hyun-sung had that thought. A sickness. Kim Hyun-sung had no words for it at the time. He had been sick. Rather than making money from the game, he had used the skills to mentally feel satisfied. The video of him defeating Casabulo and his arena PVP matches were all placed on free websites.

He would search his name on the portal sites and giggle every time his video had a hit.

“I don’t know why I did that.”

He could only lament about it now. Kim Hyun-sung shuffled back to his studio apartment from the convenience store and placed his bag on the floor. He drank a can of beer and sighed.

Park Ji-seok had been watching Emperor Rake’s raid of the boss in Ajan Labyrinth.

5 years ago. The memories of his 17 year old self. King Laden VS Emperor Rake.

If he could turn back time then Kim Hyun-sung would go back to 5 years ago. And everything started in the ‘Ellehab Jungle.’ No, even if he did. He would never become a member of the Paragon Guild.

Never.

He couldn’t help getting wound up at the thoughts. He opened a can of beer as carbonate emerged. He had shaken it a little bit on the way. Kim Hyun-sung placed his mouth to the beer foam and slurped.

‘I can’t beat him.’

He could never win.

Kuoh. He sipped the beer before putting it down again.

It was the same no matter how many times he thought about it. The system couldn’t be broken. No, the system wasn’t the problem. Kim Hyun-sung thought as he watched his computer monitor emitting light.

‘It was Rake.’

It wasn’t only the system. Rake’s skills were top-notched. Laden was at the peak of killing people while Rake was at the peak of blocking the opponent’s attacks. Including the top level items, the result was obvious.

Laden killed while Rake went on raids. The gap between their items was too big. Laden had Tier 4 equipment while Rake had Tier 5 and 6 items and equipment. The difference in specifications meant he didn’t do any damage when hitting him. He was in the same state and he also had skills that recovered stamina. No, there were no skills involved.

His defense was so high that other damage was just ignored. Rake also had strong strength and stamina. There was a pool of his own resilience that could raise stamina.

He only defended and didn't attack. The 14th type Black Light Sword Ragnar. A monk's stamina was relatively low and its defense couldn't withstand the Black Light Sword Ragnar. Just one graze would make 1/100th of his stamina disappear.

Therefore.

It was a complete defeat.

"That's why I had to quit!"

He complained as he drank the beer can. He couldn't forget but it was hardly heartbreaking. If he hadn't deleted his character then he would be playing the game all the time.

'Valhalla.'

The search term 'Rake's Ajan Raid' topped the portal sites. 2nd place was 'Rake and Ajan Labyrinth.' Number 3 was 'Rake.' 4th was 'Ajan Labyrinth.' So the entire Korean portal site was plastered with one player's name.

"Dammit! I could be playing the game right now."

Kim Hyun-sung grumbled while drinking beer.

Kung kung.

Someone knocked on the door of his studio.

Kim Hyun-sung got up as he heard the knocking. The clock showed that it was 11 p.m. None of his friends would be coming over at this late hour. Kim Hyun-sung was puzzled as he walked towards the door.

"Who is it?"

He asked as he stood in front of the door. There was no answer. What? Kim Hyun-sung looked through the lens on his front door.

The blurry lens showed that someone was standing outside the door. Kim Hyun-sung quickly glanced away from the door. He only drank one can of beer.

He was sober. But what did he see? Kim Hyun-sung was momentarily puzzled before looking through the lens again.

He wasn't mistaken.

A woman was standing in the dim lighting. She had whitish hair and was wearing a well-dressed suit. Kim Hyun-sung hesitated for a brief moment

“....Who are you?”

And he asked again. It was almost midnight. No friends would come over at this time, let alone a woman. Not only that, Kim Hyun-sung didn't know anyone of the opposite sex with white hair.

“Please open.”

The voice was heard from outside the door. Kim Hyun-sung gulped and swallowed his saliva. A slightly husky voice. He looked through his memories but couldn't remember any woman with a voice like that.

‘No, she said to open but...’

A person he had never seen before. Even if the person was a woman, he had no reason to listen to her words. But he couldn't just leave it like this. Kim Hyun-sung thought quickly before asking mildly.

“....Why should I open the door when I don't know who you are?”

“Kim Hyun-sung. Is that right?”

“...That's...right. No, I asked who you are.”

“I came from Hero Corporation.”

The woman replied. She pulled out a business card and pushed it against the lens. Kim Hyun-sung who was looking through the lens withdrew in surprise.

“Confirm it.”

“Hero Corporation...Hero Corporation?”

He had to ask again. Kim Hyun-sung had heard of Hero Corporation. Hero was the name of the company that serviced Valhalla. Kim Hyun-sung put the chain on his door.

And he opened the door. He looked outside through the slightly opened door. A hand approached.

“Confirm it.”

The woman said. Kim Hyun-sung received a business card. There was a phone number and email written below the logo of Hero Corporation.

‘Alice.’

“A foreigner?”

Kim Hyun-sung unknowingly muttered. There was no surname. There was only Alice and three letters written. Perhaps it was an award. Kim Hyun-sung handed the business card back. He didn’t say anything.

“Did you check it?”

Alice asked. No, should he believe this? Kim Hyun-sung looked down at the business card. And then he looked at Alice standing outside the door.

“...No...even if I confirmed it...this...”

“I only want to say one thing.”

Alice’s face appeared in the open gap. Kim Hyun-sung flinched back. Alice’s face was closely approaching. There were no blemishes on the white face and she had gold eyes. And silver hair. Alice had the same visuals as a cosplayer and she smiled.

“If you don’t let me through the door then you’ll be missing out on the biggest opportunity in your life.”

“...The biggest opportunity in my life?”

“Yes. An opportunity.”

Alice said with strength behind her words. No, even if she said so. Kim Hyun-sung’s face was still full of doubts.

“....Ah. I don’t know.”

In the end, Kim Hyun-sung unlocked the chain on his door. The biggest opportunity in his life. He was suspicious but he had already been caught by the woman. However, he could subdue a woman if he wanted.

‘I haven’t cleaned my room.’

Kim Hyun-sung worried about it as Alice entered the room. A man living in a one bedroom studio apartment. He regularly cleaned but he hadn’t gotten rid of the trash yet. Kim Hyun-sung coughed as Alice entered through the door.

It might be his imagination but the smell of flowers seemed to drift through the dark room.

“Hello.”

The room was a mess but Alice didn’t seem to mind. Rather, she turned towards Kim Hyun-sung and laughed. Kim Hyun-sung looked Alice in the face. Shiny silver hair and gold eyes.

‘Lens?’

She looked like a foreigner but her pronunciation seemed Korean. Hyun-sung looked around the room and shrugged. The only chair was the computer chair. Hyun-sung pulled out the chair and coughed.

“Um...sit here.”

“Yes.”

Alice sat on the chair while Kim Hyun-sung sat on his bed. Then he closed his mouth and gazed at Alice. Well, he could get her a drink. But Kim Hyun-sung only had instant coffee in his house. It was because he didn’t really enjoy coffee.

“...Opportunity. What are you talking about?”

“King Laden.”

Alice replied in a small voice once the question was asked. Kim Hyun-sung flinched and he trembled.

“5 years ago, that was a famous name that all players knew in Fantasia.”

“....What about it?”

Kim Hyun-sung looked at Alice nervously. Like Alice said, Laden was famous 5 years ago.

And now? People remembered Laden but not a lot of people mentioned the name. If they did mention it, they acted like he was a man from ancient times. A

lot had changed in 5 years. Fantasia had declined along with Laden.

“Why didn’t you start the game again after that?”

Kim Hyun-sung bit his lips at Alice’s question.

He was defeated and coolly deleted his character. In fact, he wasn’t cool at all. He kicked his blanket, buried his face in the pillow and cried. Of course he didn’t want to delete. But it was more shameless to continue playing the game after deleting his character. A 17 year old’s mental state was like a piece of glass.

Once he deleted, he simply couldn’t play the game again. No, he didn’t have a capsule so he would find it hard to start Fantasia after everything that happened. After Valhalla was released, there were several times when he thought about starting Valhalla.

But he didn’t start it.

“...Just...that...school came up. My life became too busy. And getting back into the game is a little...”

“Do you know how the other top ranked players at that time is living now?”

“I know very well. Rake is doing well in Valhalla. The other Korean ranked players are also doing well in Valhalla.”

He didn’t need to bother looking for them. The top ranked players were already stars in Korea.

Three among them could be considered representatives. The internet BJ and guild master of Saulabi Guild, Rubeck. Garam, guild leader of Weiss. Luanos, guild leader of Black Butterfly. They were considered the top ranking Korean players in Valhalla and their names were also known throughout the world. The top rankers of Valhalla could be considered the new ‘Hallyu Wave.’

“Apart from Alkena, I know that most of them have moved to Valhalla.”

“And Laden. You too.”

Alice said with a warm smile. Kim Hyun-sung firmly shut his mouth and was silent at those words. Kim Hyun-sung still couldn’t believe that Alice was from Hero Corporation and he could figure out her intent from those words.

“...What do you want to say?”

He didn't feel good talking about 5 years ago. He didn't want to hear about it. It was natural for Kim Hyun-sung's voice to rise sharply.

“Come to Valhalla.”

And Alice replied as she beamed at Kim Hyun-sung. Kim Hyun-sung's irritation went away at the sight of that beautiful smile. He narrowed his eyes as he gazed at Alice.

“....Are game companies recruiting new users like this these days? Valhalla is the best game in the world. Last that I heard, the number of users exceeded 100 million people.”

“King Laden isn't an ordinary user so I think you are worthy enough to be recruited in this way.”

“Hey, look here. I don't know what you expect from me...I am obsolete. I became obsolete years ago. I might've been called King Laden but that was 5 years ago. Furthermore, didn't I delete my character after being defeated?”

“It was a fight that couldn't be won. The difference in specifications was too large. But Kim Hyun-sung ssi. If the you at that time....had a similar level and items to Rake. What do you think would've happened?”

“I would win.”

Kim Hyun-sung replied without any hesitation.

“We weren't at a similar level. Rake was wearing Tier 5 and 6 equipment. I was only wearing Tier 4 items.”

He was confident enough to be called arrogant. But Kim Hyun-sung was convinced. The Tier 4 equipment was the problem. He couldn't overcome the disparity between items.

“I think so as well. At that time, Kim Hyun-sung's PVP was unmistakeably at the peak. The opponent is good but not as good as Kim Hyun-sung's character.”

“...But I gave up. Now Alice ssi is telling me to return.”

“What do you think is the reason for the difference in specifications?”

“...I didn’t go on raids. That’s all. Boss monsters in raids would drop good items.”

He caught Casabulo in a 1: 1 fight. No, it wasn’t only Casabulo. He could catch any humanoid monster in a 1:1 match. He identified the patterns and could respond instantaneously.

But the large monsters were different.

“—If Kim Hyun-sung starts Valhalla.”

Alice had a smile on her face. She naturally crossed her legs and looked in Kin Hyun-sung’s face.

“We will provide everything possible to make sure Kim Hyun-sung ssi is comfortable while playing.”

“...Excuse me. Even if I want to, I can’t play the game. I need a part time job to eat and my debts...I have no money for a capsule or to register an account...”

“Didn’t I tell you? We will provide everything to ensure a comfortable gameplay.”

Alice pulled out a cell phone as she spoke. A holographic image that only Alice could see flashed in front of her.

“Kim Hyun-sung’s basic living expenses and tuition debts. The rent for this studio. Hero Corporation will cover all of it. And we will also assist with a state of the art capsule and account.”

Kim Hyun-sung’s mouth dropped open at those words.

“Why are you going so far?”

“Kim Hyun-sung debt and living expenses is a grain of sand in the desert compared to Hero Corporation’s profit. And the support...Kim Hyun-sung ssi is Laden.”

Alice laughed as she touched the hologram a few times. Kim Hyun-sung’s cell phone started ringing.

“Check it.”

Kim Hyun-sung lifted the cell phone that he had left next to his bed. His

expression changed as he looked down at the cell phone. His negative bank account had disappeared. And quite a bit of money was deposited.

“...This is...what...”

“That should be enough for you to live over the next few months. So, what would you like to do? Do you want to start Valhalla?”

“....What do you want from me? I told you that I am obsolete...”

“We hope that Kim Hyun-sung ssi will enjoy Valhalla.”

Alice interrupted Kim Hyun-sung’s words.

“That’s all. Do anything you want in Valhalla. Enjoy PVP like in Fantasia or enjoy raids that you couldn’t then. I didn’t want to say this but Kim Hyun-sung... no, I was a fan of Laden. I hope the famous Laden from Fantasia will return in Valhalla. That is sufficient.”

Alice slowly got up.

“I am confident.”

Alice looked down at Kim Hyun-sung’s face and smiled.

“Laden will be the new icon of Valhalla.”

| Next Chapter

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